



# JBMS NEWSLETTER

Published by The John Bradburne Memorial Society  
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SUMMER 2018

## **BREAKING NEWS:** **The Cause for Beatification of John Bradburne**

The John Bradburne Memorial Society has been accepted by Archbishop Robert Ndlovu of Harare, Zimbabwe to act as petitioner for the cause for Beatification of John Bradburne.

The JBMS have appointed a postulator; Enrico Graziano Giovanni Solinas and Amilcare Conti as the Administrator both from Perugia, Italy who are well versed in the cause process. They will in turn work with the Congregation for the Causes of Saints. The postulator is the person who will oversee the process in liaison with all those involved in the matter.

We ask for prayers for the process to go smoothly in the coming months ahead. JBMS has collated much material over the last twenty-five years of operating, which is ongoing. We shall work with our partners to try to ensure that the process gives honour to John Bradburne's sanctity, which is a gift for the Universal Church.

We thank all those who have supported our charity over the years, and find ourselves on a new and exciting journey!

For anyone who wishes to donate to the Cause process please mark any donation 'for the cause', so we are clear that this is what the funds are to be used for. This can be done online on the JBMS website: [www.johnbradburne.com](http://www.johnbradburne.com)

or on our just giving donation page:

[https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/johnbradburne?utm\\_id=1&utm\\_term=8VD8Zk5rR](https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/johnbradburne?utm_id=1&utm_term=8VD8Zk5rR)

Or of course by post.

If anyone is a tax-payer then a stamped addressed envelope will be sent to you if you wish us to claim tax back on your gift. The Gift Aid form is also downloadable on the donations page of the website.



**Tim Brigstocke and daughter  
Kate Macpherson signing petition  
for the Cause, Perugia.**

## Celia Brigstocke

7th October 1954 - 16th August 2018

It is with great regret that we report that Celia Brigstocke, the Secretary of JBMS, niece of John Bradburne and the driving force behind the society since its inception has sadly passed away on Thursday 16th August after having been diagnosed with brain cancer two and a half months prior. She will be deeply missed by her family, friends, JBMS members and all who knew her.

We are praying that Celia is now with John Bradburne, in God's hands and that we can continue her legacy with as much devotion and love as she committed.

Celia would very much hope that the huge generosity so many have given for so long to Mutemwa Leprosy and Care Centre continues so that the settlement may continue to thrive and provide the much needed support and care it currently delivers.



The Trustees are delighted that the Cause for the Propagation of Saints at last appears to be making some progress and we continue to pray for the Beatification of John Bradburne.

Celia's eldest daughter, Kate Macpherson will be taking over her role as Secretary and has been fully involved with John's Cause from the beginning. Kate is hoping to continue her mother's legacy and the realisation of John's Canonisation.

## Where your money is being spent

This year we are asking for donations both for the Leprosy Settlement in Zimbabwe and raising money for John's Cause for Beatification. In all donations sent please specify where you would like your money being used.

### John's Cause:

In order to go forward with the Beatification process, we need to fundraise. The postulator and his team will conduct a huge amount of research, visits and interviews. These activities will be conducted in numerous countries and will require much time, travel and effort. It is estimated that £20,000 is required to make John a Saint at the Congregation of Causes for Saints. If successful, John would become the first English Saint in 400 years and Zimbabwe's first Saint ever. If this happens it will bring much publicity to the charity and it is hoped that this will greatly help future fundraising for the Leprosy Care Centre. The just giving page especially dedicated for the cause is: [https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/johnbradburne?utm\\_id=1&utm\\_term=8VD8Zk5rR](https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/johnbradburne?utm_id=1&utm_term=8VD8Zk5rR).

### Leprosy Care Centre:

We are trying to provide funds to get the water meter fixed at the Care Centre as a priority. They have asked for more water sources so this is going to be considered.

As a matter of urgency, we are trying to look for ways of improving and optimising medical care at the Care Centre.

The staff salaries, upkeep and training is another area of importance.

There is always a need for food, medical supplies and clothing in Mutemwa. This will remain an ongoing task.

Site upkeep and maintenance also remains a continuous job.

We are always fundraising and thinking of ways to raise money for the Mutemwa Leprosy Settlement. If you have any ideas of putting on events to raise money please take photos and do let us know.

## An Offering of Life

### JOHN RANDAL BRADBURNE

Father David Harold Barry SJ has written An Offering Of Life setting out ten main reflections why John should be honoured with official recognition from the Vatican. This is a shortened version of the document. Please see the unedited piece on our website [www.johnbradburne.com](http://www.johnbradburne.com)

- 1. The humblest of people.** John was the humblest person I have ever known. He would sign his letters, “John Bee (drone, groan!)”. This was playful but it was also real. He never chose to be a wanderer. Amidst all his efforts to find his place in life he was utterly faithful to the leading of the Spirit. And if the Spirit led him “nowhere”, he went nowhere. He never sought what would make him feel satisfied or comfortable. He knew others viewed him as eccentric, a rolling stone, useless, “Can’t make up his mind?” But he never compromised or looked for the approval of others. He just went on searching, often finding respite for a time somewhere others would think impractical. While living in the organ loft in Palma (Italy) he wrote to John Dove: “It has been a fantastic 2 ½ months, and, believe me, I have just blundered along in a most praiseworthy way. More and more we learn to rely on God entirely, to love only – the life of grace, with utter contempt of our own strength... As for me I am deeply convinced (and this half against my personal and poetic inclination), that for a time, maybe for a long time, maybe until the end, my role is here, nowhere else...”
- 2. Awesomely obedient to the Spirit.** He was not obedient to superiors, as clerics and the religious are, since he had none, but he was obedient to the Spirit in a way that many, vowed formally to obedience, considered to be extreme. I have mentioned his instant decision to stay at Mutemwa when all who were close to him counselled a time to consider and “think about it.” To him it was immediately blindingly clear and yet, on the surface, appallingly unattractive. It had always been this way.
- 3. Complete trust in God.** John had complete trust in God. When his great friend, John Dove, chose the title *Strange Vagabond of God* for his memoir he hit on a description John used about himself which fits exactly his way of life. He was a pilgrim, wandering three continents. John was sure of his goal yet unsure of the way to it.

The physical wandering ceased when he arrived at Mutemwa in 1969. The leprosy settlement, so distasteful to many visitors, was the Jerusalem he longed for. He told Kit and Arthur Law, “I’m very happy here; this is my journey’s end.”<sup>1</sup> Heather Benoy, a great friend of John, says Mutemwa “made” John. When he arrived in Mutemwa he was faced with a sea of suffering. Their faces and limbs deformed by a terrible disease. The lepers were covered in filth and untreated running sores... the sight of curled up dislocated fingernails added to the horror... surprised by the arrival of strangers (John and Heather), the lepers retreated to their huts and re-emerged with a sack or a blanket covering their heads... stupefied John demanded to know what was going on, only to discover that the lepers were forced to cover their faces, because they were too ugly to be seen – as ordered by Chaka, the director of the Centre, a former policeman. Overcome, John’s only words were: ‘My God, My God.’”<sup>2</sup>

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1 Poem “To a Wandering Jew” (1958)

2 Quoted by Rance p308

4. **Prayer filled his life.** It is quite obvious that prayer filled his life. Like a compass pointing to the pole his whole life was orientated towards God. But mostly, I feel, he loved the freedom to raise his heart to God at every moment. He was faithful to the Little Office of Our Lady and would sing aloud when alone. In his busy unpredictable schedule at Mutemwa he would make sure he was “ahead” with this office. I will say no more on this, as it is a hopeless task to do it justice. John was absorbed with God, attuned to Him in everything.
5. **Bringing out the best in people.** John’s prayer overflowed into his contagious happiness and this was another sign of John’s special closeness to God. I have noticed it in other people I have known. Jean Vanier, who incidentally wrote the foreword to Didier’s book, has a way of giving you energy and feeling good about yourself. A close friend of John’s in England, Stephen King, noticed John’s knack of talking to his children in a way that made them feel important as grown-ups, and he marveled at John’s talent for always bringing out the best in everybody.
6. **A restless searching.** “I dream of a restless Church,” said Pope Francis to a Church gathering in Florence in November 2017. The Holy Father was referring to a Church always on the move, always a pilgrim. John, it seems to me, has a message for the Church today in his restless, generous and courageous search for the will of God. He could be entirely rooted at a particular time and in a particular place. But he could equally get up and go somewhere else without a moment’s hesitation. Living in such a tension, it seems to me, is a sign of the Church in our time.
7. **A love for our common home.** John loved the world and its beauty. He made friends with creatures of every sort and often gave them names: a raven, a cat, an eagle, a dog. And he loved bees and prayed they would linger about him and guard his privacy at Silveira. His visitors kept away! I remember his intense excitement at Mutemwa in discovering the nest of a hammerkop and he would take visitors to see it with the excitement of someone showing you a rare treasure in the British Museum. He loved the hills, the fields, the sea and the stars. All of these spoke to him and widened his horizon of wonder. And he loved England. As his ship approached Southampton on returning home after the war he wrote;

...I gloated for my country, and I thought of her

The fairest sunlit isle where one may stand;

I strolled her in my soul, did hold her hand...

He was like one who soaked up her fields and valleys, her trees and animals as well as her literature and her past – the age of madrigals and Shakespeare. All these nourished his soul, found their way into his writing and contributed to his life long search.

8. **Compassion for those who suffer.** Didier Rance mentions.

During his rounds John would change bandages, dress wounds wherever necessary and distribute medication to those in need. He washed those unable to care for themselves, with a smile, a pleasantry, a kind word... Fr John Gough wrote, ‘He was just as unwilling as the rest of us. It was not a nice disease and yet John totally gave himself to these people.

Dr Luisa Guidotti, who was shot and killed two months before John, used to visit Mutemwa regularly. She wrote:

At first those poor people appear disgusting with their sores, their stumps, their deformed faces. Later on, one enters into God’s light, achieving real friendship with them. They

become loving people and one notices their patient resignation. No longer do you love them for God's sake, nor because they help one to give charity, but because they become one's own dear friends. I hope you can understand what I mean. It is a wonderful experience.

- 9. Unwavering in adversity.** John's first years in Mutemwa were happy. He had found the solitude and the community he had always wanted. But from 1973 until his death six years later John faced great trials. He was accused by the Rhodesian Leprosy Committee, which had responsibility for the settlement, of "being careless with supplies and not keeping proper books." John was sacked, and as mentioned earlier, withdrew to a tent on the nearby hill for several months. His friends were furious but there was nothing they could do. The rations were reduced and the new warden was a man without a heart for the people. John lived on his mountain and prayed and waited. He could not run away now. Besides, the Archbishop had appointed him chaplain so he still had a right to enter the settlement, he interpreted his brief widely and would visit the sick, accompany the dying and bury the dead. But he felt the rejection.

At the same time the war for freedom, which started in earnest in 1972, reached the district and created tension, suspicion and danger on all sides. Didier Rance has given, to my knowledge, the first full description of John's last days and hours. In early September he was abducted from his hut, led away for "trial", acquitted Pilate-like but condemned anyway and shot on the road between Mutoko and Nyamapanda on the 5<sup>th</sup>. It all happened suddenly in the end. Something within us expected it but it was still a terrible shock.

A packed Cathedral received his remains on 10<sup>th</sup> September, the day the peace talk to end the war – which were ultimately successful – opening in London. After Holy Communion I, and several others, saw drops of blood fall from his coffin. The undertaker was aghast but on opening the casket found everything in order. It was the first of many posthumous signs of John's closeness to Jesus.

- 10. Verdict of the people.** After the death of John a spontaneous devotion to him sprung up, starting in Harare and rapidly spreading to other parts of Zimbabwe, South Africa, the UK and elsewhere. People were fascinated by his way of life, his generosity, his obvious closeness to God and his love for the people. They came in – literally – their thousands and began to use the mountain overlooking Mutemwa as a site for all night prayer. This was particularly evident on the 5<sup>th</sup> September each year but smaller "pilgrimages" continued throughout the year. Mutemwa became a place of spiritual nourishment and rest for those who "labour and are burdened."

Next year it will be forty years since John died and promoters of John's cause, together with thousands in the country and abroad, long for some kind of breakthrough for his cause after these years "of wandering in the desert." John, careless of his own well being while he was alive, also wanted this recognition, not for his own sake but to help many others. "Pray for my sanctification," he wrote from Italy to a friend in 1952, "but because it would encourage so many souls if such a wreckage might come to canonization."

**David Harold Barry SJ**  
**Lusaka, 28<sup>th</sup> January 2018**

## Mutemwa Leprosy and Care Centre Report

### **Patients:**

There are currently 38 patients at the care centre who have leprosy, disabilities and destitute. They are being cared for by the carers onsite and we are praying for their welfare.

### **Bee Keeping:**

Mrs J.R. Kawadza donated 25 bee hives for the centre last year and this project has started to produce 16½ litres of honey bringing in an income for the centre.

### **Garden:**

The garden is producing tomatoes, peas, watermelons, bananas, and sugar cane. Watering the gardens is a problem, as there is very little

water supply and the gardens need a huge amount. Ideally the centre would like to have its own small dam so they can pump their own water. This is something JBMS would like to help raise money towards.

### **Government Visit:**

The First Lady of Zimbabwe (The President's wife) came to visit Mutemwa, she was not aware of it prior to this visit and was deeply touched by visiting the lepers. She has named Mutemwa as an institution to give quarterly donations to of ingredients such as salt, rice, cooking oil, flour, peanut butter, mealie meal. We hope that even in the turbulence of Zimbabwe's politics, this will continue.



Some of the patients at the Care Centre, Mutemwa, Zimbabwe.

## YOUR LETTERS

Dear JBMS

I have read in the Telegraph about a Cause for Canonisation of John Bradburne and have the pleasure of enclosing a donation to assist.

I met him once in Hare Street House when restoration had just been completed, I think about 1962. My Parents were very friendly with Derek Warlock who was Secretary to Cardinal Godfrey at that time, and we all visited to see the completed work.

We were introduced to John Bradburne in the garden when he was caretaker there.

I was also introduced to his work at Mutemwa by an ex-Trustee of JBMS many years ago, and have received your newsletters ever since.

I realise that there are a few connections, knowing also Fr Michael O'Halloran who was Master of Ceremonies at John's funeral.

I will be joining in your prayers for his Canonisation.

*M.J – Birmingham*

I just wanted to say how impressed I am at the swiftness of John's intercession.

I picked up a free booklet in our parish and I instantly started praying to John for all sorts of things, I just felt I could confide in his help from above.

He has never left my side and I now have a special friend in Heaven I can share my requests, my sorrows and my joys with.

I have read the new biography which is amazing, and I have no doubt that John is working for us here on earth. He is a saint of our times!

*E.S - Ascot*

Thank you JBMS for sending me info on the amazing J.B! I have come to love him very much. Keep up the good work and thank you for sharing his life with others. He certainly is a great help to me!

*L.M – London*

I first heard of John Bradburne during my time in Zambia. His name regularly cropped up in conversation, but always with tremendous reverence. Priests, religious, lay people... it

made no difference. Everybody took it for granted that John Bradburne is a Saint and Martyr.

God Bless

*Sister J. Fearns – Surrey*

I would like to join your mailing by email. John Bradburne was an example of what Jesus asks all of us to be, loving, kind and helpful.

*M.B.*

I have received John's help on four occasions. The first when my friend Marjorie had a bad riding accident. As in the case with spinal injuries, she had no guarantee she would walk again and she was in a wheelchair when I went to see her in Wakefield General hospital. She has worked hard on her rehabilitation, but apart from some weakness in her hands, she is up and about. On two other occasions, I prayed for my nephew Jonathan and my daughter Mhairi who had both been ill and again things are going in the right direction. I also had an abnormal scan, and I was going to the clinic terrified. I read an article about bees in the waiting room, and felt everything would be fine, which it was. I realise that everything is open to interpretation, but I firmly believe in John's influence and intervention on those occasions.

*M.Todd*

My Doberman dog had a cancerous lump on her paw which my vet wouldn't remove. I found a vet who would do the operation, but she wanted to take a specimen before operating when she learned that my dog had a heart murmur she wouldn't touch her. I asked John to help and it went away and my dog lived on for another 4 years, a miracle!

*B.W – Hampshire*

I was privileged enough to meet John Bradburne when my ex husband Robin, was stationed at the District Commissioner's Office in Mutoko. Robin and I were invited to John's most humble abode with such pride and joy. He was living with such joy and humility that when I look

back at this time in my life, I realise that I have never met a person such as John. He radiated such joy and happiness from himself, there was almost an inner glow.

When I went to work, I would see John going about his daily life amongst people who lived in appalling conditions and poverty, but whom were so happy within themselves. I can remember my personal horror when I understood how the disease caused the loss of the extremities of hands and feet. The government of the day gave them a very small grant, but not sustainable for the amount of people there. People gave John money and other things that he shared with his friends at Mutemwa. What appeals to me most is that there is still a need for this settlement. What a

tragedy that politics have not changed this from biblical times.

*S.B – South Africa*

Whist writing, I just thought I would mention something which strikes me as being more than coincidence: in the course of researching content for the magazine, I happened across a job advertisement for a position with the St Francis Leprosy Guild. In the meantime, I read the article about John Bradburne in The Daily Telegraph, which not only started my dialogue with Celia, but with JB, too!

I asked for his help in discerning whether this was something I should take on and to cut a long story short, it must be as I've been offered the job!

*S.P*



John standing on Chigona mountain, above Mutemwa, Zimbabwe.



Coletta and her daughter on Chigona mountain, Zimbabwe.

## Dates for your Diary

**7/8/9th September 2018** - Christians and non-Christians walk from Mutemwa Leprosy Settlement up Chigona Mountain for a Holy night dedicated to prayer and worship.

**10th September 2018 at 11am** - Celia Brigstocke's Funeral. St. Joseph's Church, Portsmouth Road, Milford, Surrey GU8 5DU.

**7th September 2019** - Westminster Cathedral, The Opening of The Cause of John's Beatification and John Bradburne's 40th Anniversary Celebrations. More details to follow in due course.





# **JBMS ITEMS LIST 2017/18**

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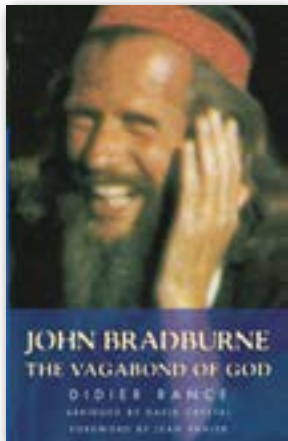


# ITEMS AVAILABLE FROM THE JOHN BRADBURNE MEMORIAL SOCIETY

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by Didier Rance

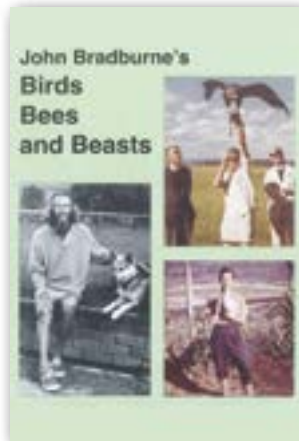
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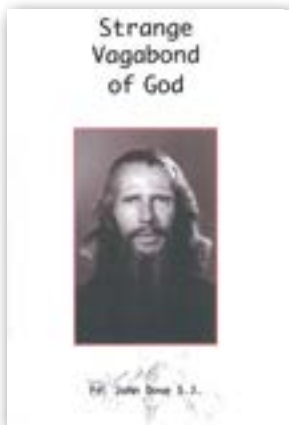


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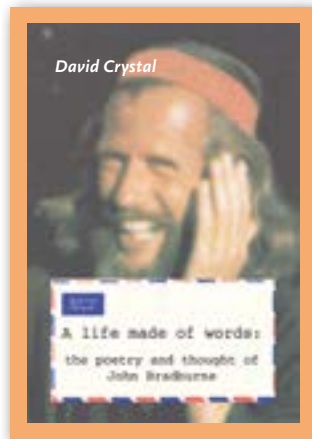
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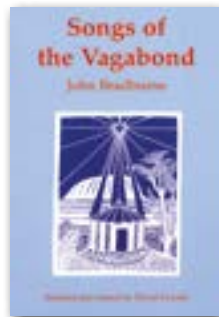
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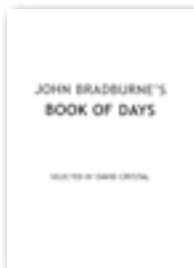
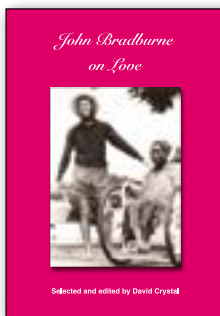
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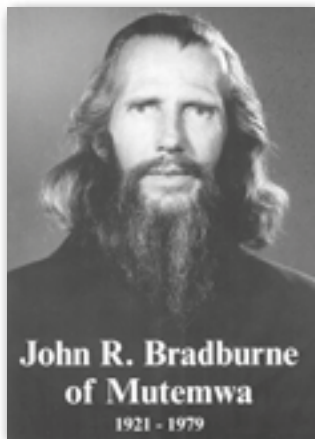
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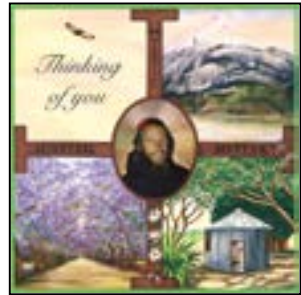
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**Winter 2017**

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